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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this guidebook is to help community collaboratives gain a deeper awareness and understanding of the implications of diversity through their work. This includes designing service strategies, involving community residents in planning and governance, establishing outcomes and accountability systems, and developing financing systems. The guide provides seven general principles for embracing diversity in comprehensive reforms developed by the organization California Tomorrow, including involving people from diverse neighborhoods and constituencies in program design and development, and valuing the role that culture and language play in developing healthy families, individuals, and communities. The guidebook begins with a brief rationale for the relevance of valuing diversity and practicing inclusion, and how it fits as a vital part of the work of community reform efforts. Next are discussions of key ideas and the steps involved in putting the ideas into practice. The guidebook concludes with four appendices: an article on drawing strength from diversity, an annotated bibliography on community building and diversity, additional resources on respecting diversity in frontline practice, and discussion of the principles put forth in the report "Cultural Democracy and Power Sharing." (JPB)

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A Matter of Commitment

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Valuing Diversity:
Practicing Inclusion

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About the Guidebooks

Over the past decade, there has been a dramatic growth in the creation of community collaborations to design and implement new service approaches for children, youth, and families to better address individual, neighborhood, and community needs. Many of these community collaborations have become very sophisticated in their work, learning and expanding their vision as they go forward.

Many began primarily as collaborations of service providers -- involving organizations and agencies providing health, education, and human services. Increasingly, however, such collaborations have moved beyond a strictly service approach, recognizing that they must involve the entire community to succeed and that they must address economic and social as well as human capital development needs.

As collaborations seek to improve child, youth, and family outcomes on a community level, they inevitably recognize the complexity, as well as the importance, of their task.

In 1994, three organizations -- the Center for the Study of Social Policy, the Child and Family Policy Center, and the Family Resource Coalition of America -- came together with the hope of combining our experiences in the field into something that would be useful to community collaborations seeking comprehensive change. The Center for the Study of Social Policy initiated this work a part of its Improved Outcomes for Children project. The Academy for Educational Development/Center for Youth Development and Policy Research provided guidance and support to us in recognizing the importance of youth development and involvement.

Organizing our experiences and the knowledge we have gained has proved to be a challenge. We started from the premise that society can improve the well-being of its children, but to do so will require fundamental changes in the way communities (both their public and private systems) support and serve children, youth, and families. The work over the last decade represents a base upon which to build.

If we are to impact the current sobering outcomes and trends threatening our children and our society, however, the next decade will require both a broadening and a deepening of these reform efforts. We will have to break new ground to succeed.

Our experience tells us that the changes needed to improve the well-being of children, youth, and families are broad-reaching and involve three complementary and interrelated elements:

1. Effective services and supports that reach out to and connect with children, youth, and families;

2. Community and economic development that provides opportunities for sustaining and supporting families through employment within all neighborhoods in the community; and

3. Neighborhood and consumer participation and involvement in constructing those services and supports and other conditions required to ensure sound futures for children and communities.

This requires changes on many levels. In the end, we sought to arrange our knowledge base about successful reform efforts into different subject areas. While the goal is to produce a comprehensive guide, the different subject areas also lend themselves to separate publication, represented by this series of Guidebooks.

These Guidebooks share a common format. Each Guidebook begins with a brief rationale for the relevance of the subject area and how it fits as a vital part of the work of a community collaboration seeking comprehensive reform. Next is a discussion of the key ideas embodied in the subject, followed by a discussion of the steps involved in putting the ideas into practice. Finally, the appendices contain additional related materials for further discussion of the subject.

These subject areas, of course, are not discrete. They overlap and interconnect. The back cover of this Guidebook provides a brief description of all the proposed chapters for the comprehensive guide and identifies which ones currently are available in Guidebook form.

The National Center for Service Integration Clearinghouse is responsible for editing and publishing these Guidebooks. The preparation of the Guidebooks has been supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

The three sponsoring organizations are excited about the work of community collaborations across the country. We believe that this work holds the best promise for truly addressing the needs of our children, youth, and families. As the adjoining page suggests, we believe it is a matter of commitment and now is the time for action.

Center for the Study of Social Policy
Child and Family Policy Center
Family Resource Coalition of America

A Matter of Commitment: Making the Case for Reform

1. **Things are getting serious.** Current systems fail too many children, youth, and families, and trends in child well-being are deteriorating. This places increasing numbers of children, youth, and families at risk and weakens society as a whole.

2. **We know what works (but we are doing it only at the margins).** The country abounds with promising programs, services, and strategies that are helping children, youth, and families succeed. They embrace new principles of effective practice and emphasize neighborhood-based approaches that build local systems of support, but have had little effect on a community level. In part, this is because these efforts are being implemented only on a small scale and at the margin, without transforming larger public system responses.

3. **Implementing what works at the community level requires changes in all systems.** Isolated programs, services, and supports fight against the odds to help children, youth, and families. All systems must change and respond according to new principles of effective practice, including such mainstream systems as education, health services, and the array of human services and incorporating housing, job training, and economic development activities.

4. **Everyone has a stake and a responsibility.** Achieving success at a community level requires new partnerships and collaborations -- within and across public systems, at all levels of government, in publicly-financed services and in voluntary community organizations. Most importantly, it requires involvement of the youth and families whose futures are most at stake. The diversity of perspectives within the community need to be represented in the decision-making process. The business community and the faith community, as well as many other interests, need to support and help guide the work. Every part of the community has a stake and a role to play.

5. **We can succeed; it's a matter of commitment.** Although the path to success is still being cleared and constructed, the journey is not hopeless. It is simply a matter of sustained commitment to achieve that success. Moreover, there is no other way to get to where we need to go. A small but representative group of truly committed people can build the commitment needed among others for the journey. The time to start is now.

About the Authors

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How this Guidebook Fits with the Vision

No community collaborative can succeed over the long haul without the full understanding and support of the community. That is why the vision stresses the need to base outcomes and strategies on common community values and goals.

But communities are not monolithic. They are made up of people with diverse perspectives, experiences, identities, and strengths. A major challenge for collaboratives is to recognize and honor that diversity. A collaborative that understands the value of incorporating diversity is in a better position to identify a community's common values and goals. Tapping into the community's knowledge means hearing all the voices in a community — not just the loudest, most powerful, or most well-positioned. It means talking things out and being willing to share authority when it comes to resolving issues where perspectives differ.

Recognizing, valuing and responding to diversity are critical elements of any comprehensive reform agenda. Collaborative reform efforts committed to improving the lives of children and families must:

- anticipate and recognize that differences exist,
- work in partnership to hear and respond to these differences, and

- build on the potential for change that can grow out of understanding and synthesizing different perspectives, experiences, and skills.

A community collaborative's operating principles — and all its activities — must reflect ongoing attention to diversity. Unfortunately, it is too easy for issues of diversity — in particular, race, language and culture — to be pigeonholed and sidelined in the process of building a collaborative. This may be because people are unaware of the issues or perceive them as controversial. Collaboratives which overlook issues of diversity from the outset are likely to end up needing to address them later, often with more difficulty than if they had done so at the start.

The purpose of this *Guidebook* is to help community collaboratives gain a deeper awareness and understanding of the implications of diversity through their work. This includes designing service strategies, involving community residents in planning and governance, establishing outcomes and accountability systems, and developing financing systems. The *Guidebook* begins with a discussion of key ideas and then offers seven principles for putting these ideas into practice.

Key Ideas

The strength, and the challenge, of any society is the diversity of its members. Making sure reforms reflect community values and goals means ensuring full representation and participation of all the different voices in the community. This kind of inclusiveness has to happen at every level of activity and reform -- from decision-making to frontline implementation.

Sometimes, when the issue of diversity is raised, people think solely in terms of race. In fact, however, this is only one lens through which people are viewed and view themselves, although it is a critically important one. A successful collaborative must respect, reflect, and support diversity across the following dimensions:

Race, language, culture, and ethnicity. People define themselves and are defined in a variety of ways. In the United States, race, language, culture, and ethnicity — individually and in combination — are an important part of the way individuals and groups identify themselves. Figure 3-1 provides descriptions of these dimensions of diversity.

These four dimensions of diversity have critical implications for collaboratives. If a collaborative cannot offer services that reflect the cultures and languages of the people in the community, it cannot expect to improve outcomes for families and communities. Collaboratives have to be prepared to understand and work through the dynamics of bringing together stakeholders across racial, cultural, ethnic, and

Figure 3-1
Defining Race, Language Ethnicity, and Culture

Race The term race refers to how our society categorizes people based upon skin color or general appearance. Although often used as a biological distinction, "race" is in fact a socially constructed label, as is evident in the inconsistent and biased ways people often apply racial terms. Contradictions inherent in the concept of race become even more apparent when seeking to categorize the increasing numbers of interracial births, transracial adoptions and immigrants with mixed racial heritage. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that a person's "race" profoundly affects her or his status and prospects in society. In the United States and in other countries, white skin has been associated with a perception of superiority. The purveyors of slavery used this belief to justify slavery, and its legacy continues to shape how people view others within and across racial categories.

Racism occurs when skin color and physical features determines how a person is treated. Most people think of racism in terms of individual actions, words or intent. It is mostly associated with incidents where people in positions of power discriminate against others based on the color of their skin or other physical features. But another, often more pervasive, form of racism is institutional racism. **Institutional racism** refers to any practices, policies or norms of an organization or institution that, intentionally or not, foster discrimination. These kinds of practices can lead to or justify preferential treatment toward a particular group. For instance, if an agency or center offers opportunities for program leadership to service providers who get additional training, and only white providers can afford such training, employees of color will be excluded from positions of power and leadership. In this scenario, program leaders who believe that only providers with a certain level of training and leadership have credibility will be less likely to take into account the voices and opinions of employees of color. Supervisors who treat all people equitably and respectfully in their personal lives may still unknowingly perpetuate institutional racism by supporting practices that foster this kind of discrimination in an organizational setting.

Language While English is the language most commonly spoken in the United States, people here speak a multitude of languages. Some speak Spanish, Italian, French, Vietnamese, Chinese, and other languages; others speak dialects of English such as Ebonics or Black English. Language can play an instrumental role in shaping a person's sense of individual and group identity. Clearly, it is an important means of communication among family members. But it also links larger communities and can be a vehicle for transmitting the cultural values and beliefs of particular ethnic groups. Some words from a particular language or dialect do not translate easily into another. A person's linguistic background also affects how other members of society treat him or her. In the United States, too often people see those who speak languages other than Standard English as ignorant or incapable rather than as possessing an invaluable asset. Even accents, dialects, and the use of slang can be bases for negative judgements about a person's interests or abilities.

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Culture Culture refers to the values, beliefs and traditions of a particular group. Whether that group is defined by national origin, race, language, religious background, socio-economic status or age, culture is the set of rules, that to varying degrees, guide the behavior of individuals who are part of that group. Rather than being static, the culture of a given group is constantly evolving in response to its environment. Individuals and families are often members of more than one cultural group at the same time.

Today, the Anglo-European Christian culture is the dominant culture of the United States. This is based on the historical power people originating from Britain and Western Europe have held since the founding of the country. Scholars Lynch and Hanson have identified several key values that people of this dominant culture share: (1) the importance of individualism and privacy, (2) a belief in the duality of individuals, (3) an informality in interactions with others, (4) an emphasis on the future, change and progress, (5) a belief in the general goodness of humanity, (6) an emphasis on time and punctuality, (7) a high regard for achievement, action, work and materials, and (8) a pride in being direct and assertive. These values have a tremendous influence on the thinking and behavior of people who live in the United States for long periods of time-even if they have come from a cultural group that may encompass different world views and beliefs. For example, families who immigrate from countries with cultures which place a high priority on relationships to extended family and to community elders often find that children born in this country adopt values and beliefs which give a higher priority to the needs and rights of individuals and youth.

Ethnicity Ethnicity refers to a group identity defined by a common political, historical and social experience that people use to categorize themselves and others. Ethnicity is shaped by race, language and culture, but the saliency of these factors varies by group. For example, the Latino/Hispanic population includes people who are fair as well as dark skinned. But members of the group are bound together by a common political experience in the United States — and by past colonization by the Spanish while in their countries of origin. Italian Americans are another example of an ethnic group characterized by its unique cultural and linguistic heritage rather than its skin color.

Most ethnic groups fit into a number of different cultural groups, which may all share some broad characteristics. Some ethnic groups tend to share a common language, others speak a variety of languages. A person may still identify with a particular ethnic group, even if he or she has ceased to speak the language typically spoken by members of that group.

Source: *Drawing Strength from Diversity*

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linguistic lines. Collaboratives have to be willing to look at how their own operations foster exclusion of particular groups. It matters, for example, whether meetings are held in the language or dialect of community members. It also makes a difference whether a meeting's format invites participation from groups with different styles of interaction and communication.

Collaboratives must be ready to hear and address issues new to some of their members. Often, people from the dominant (in the United States, the Western European) culture do not recognize other cultural perspectives because theirs is so pervasive. The first step is simply recognizing the potential for cultural misunderstandings or mismatches. Collaborative members must also become familiar with the concept of "institutional racism" as distinct from personal bias (see definition of race in Figure 3-1). They must be able to see that institutional policies may produce impacts different from the motives or beliefs of individuals in the particular institution. To be inclusive, people have to understand and be willing to address the consequences of past discrimination as well as any current practices that encourage exclusion. A collaborative needs to invest time and resources into deepening mutual understanding of the histories and cultures of different groups, airing grievances, and building new bridges.

Economic class. Issues of class and race often are intertwined. While discrimination may have psychological and sociological roots, it has economic consequences. Collaboratives tend to do a better job of making sure their membership is ethnically diverse than they do of representing all economic strata. Often, the majority of participants are "professionals," with little representation of working class people or people living in poverty. Part of this lack of representation,

in fact, may be institutional — that collaborative leaders may be unaware of the many economic barriers that make it hard for low-income family members to participate — like lack of transportation, money for child care, or even limited free time to attend meetings. Many collaboratives have a conception of volunteerism that does not match the economic realities of working class and poor families but is based upon professional and upper-middle class lifestyles.

People living in poverty usually are under-represented in decision-making and implementation activities, although they may have the most at stake in achieving change. They also have experiences and perspectives that are essential to designing and implementing strategies that will reach and serve them, their families, and their neighborhoods.

Gender. Clearly, society still treats people differently based on gender. The economic system discriminates by gender. Women continue to provide the majority of care-giving for children, which — despite the enormous increase in employment by mothers, especially with very young children — still affects their level of participation in the paid workforce. Women continue to make less money than men in general, even for comparable jobs. Jobs for the people, primarily women, who take care of children so parents can work full-time are low-wage jobs with few benefits. While illegal, sex discrimination continues to exist. Moreover, women are far more likely than men to be victims of inter-gender violence.

Collaboratives need to be balanced by gender so they can provide an equitable forum to address these issues of gender. Many public opinion polls have shed light on how men's and women's perspectives on public policy issues differ.

Collaboratives need to be attuned to their own gender representation and assure balance in planning and implementing activities.

It should also be noted that women are not the only victims of discrimination when it comes to human services. For example, efforts to shape family support programs and work with vulnerable families often bypass men. Some prominent groups have tried to reverse that trend by launching efforts to re-engage and connect young men with the children they helped bear. It is important that collaboratives considering such strategies understand which kinds of approaches work best in engaging men, as well as women, in family support activities.

Sexual orientation. The public is clearly divided on the issue of sexual orientation. Discrimination against gays and lesbians exists throughout the country, and crosses racial and ethnic lines. While, at a rhetorical level and on a legal basis, discrimination by race, gender, or disability is not tolerated, the same does not hold around the issue of sexual orientation.

It is likely to require the same type of time, effort, and energy that brought issues related to sexual or racial discrimination to public awareness and action in order to bring issues of discrimination based upon sexual orientation to the forefront. At the same time, there is no hierarchy of oppression. Collaboratives must be ready to confront discrimination and practice inclusion in all its manifestations.

Disability. Many lessons from the disability community's struggles for economic and social inclusion apply to reforming human services. Parents of children with disabilities frequently have had to fight for their children's inclusion in activities and

programs. They have also done battle with professionals to prove what their children are capable of achieving. Adults with disabilities have faced a number of social, economic, physical accommodation, and service barriers in participating in all aspects of life.

Collaboratives need to take these lessons to heart — not only to inform their work, but to ensure that their own membership practices the principles of inclusion. Just as language can be a barrier for non-English speaking persons, physical barriers, hearing and vision barriers, and lack of access to public support services will limit or prevent participation for people with disabilities.

Age. Many of the policies at the heart of system reform efforts are designed to address the concerns of children and young people. Yet collaborative leaders too often assume children and youths do not have much to contribute to policy discussions, implementation strategies, or assessments of a program's impact. In fact, however, children and youth have views that need to be heard and represented. They can participate effectively in many activities.

Given the rapid technological and social changes that are occurring (often within less than a generation), the insights and perspectives of young people are needed to shape meaningful programs and activities, particularly those that are designed to engage and involve children, youth, and families. Involving young people increases those youth's sense of ownership and offers opportunities to learn leadership and participation skills. When given the opportunity, young people have been forceful spokespersons in presenting the strengths and needs of their communities and can be tireless workers and mobilizers of their friends on projects that range from

organizing community events to conducting community surveys and analyzing the results. (See Figure 3-2)

Figure 3-2

Students from San Francisco's Everett Middle School recently learned valuable lessons about turning their campus into a better place. As part of a needs assessment process, the youth worked with an outside organization (St. John's Educational Thresholds Center) to conduct two separate surveys. The first asked students about their satisfaction with school and what services they would like to receive; the second surveyed local organizations that could contribute resources to Everett.

Helping to develop surveys and analyze data gave students a chance to articulate their concerns and contribute positively to the school community. For example, in surveying agencies, students not only asked what services might be available to them but also asked how students could help the agencies. As a result, one local organization that offers interactive educational programs agreed to do workshops at the school. In exchange, several students volunteer at the organization on weekends.

Students analyzed the quantitative data as part of their math course work. Disaggregating the information by ethnicity prompted students to be concerned about how students from all ethnic groups were faring in school. Students got creative with the qualitative data by performing a rap song for each classroom so that all students could hear what the survey had revealed – how students felt about their school, how they wanted to be treated with respect, and how they wanted their confidences honored.

At meetings with the school's student council, the Mayor's Task Force on the Mission, and the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, students have shared their findings and raised the concerns of young people. Students stated overwhelmingly that they wanted to be treated with respect in school and on the street and that they want to play a proactive, participatory role in their community. Involvement in the assessment planning process also incited the students' interest in community service. As a result, several initiatives geared toward youth are being implemented at Everett that give youth a strong base for exercising leadership and participating in the community.

Source: *Drawing Strength from Diversity*

Neighborhood. While individuals and families may identify with many different kinds of communities (for example, professional, church, family), they also live within a geographic neighborhood that usually has its own sense of identity and lines of demarcation. Just as individuals and families within a community are not

monolithic, neither are the neighborhoods in which they live. In fact, in most communities, there are significant differences in economic and social well-being across neighborhoods. These differences can have impacts upon individuals and families independent from race, language, culture, ethnicity, economic class, gender, disability, or age.

In neighborhoods that lack recreational spaces and opportunities and are characterized by high rates of vandalism and crime, all residents are more vulnerable. Alternatively, in neighborhoods with dense networks of supporting institutions and many watchful eyes, all residents are safer.

Collaboratives need to understand how neighborhoods contribute to individual and family well-being. That kind of information should be part of an overall strategy to address neighborhood concerns and to ensure diverse neighborhood interests are represented in planning and implementation.

In addition to the concerns for the inclusion of diverse constituencies to insure the fairness and equity of treatment across diverse interests in a community, there are other factors to consider in assuring that diverse perspectives are heard and represented within a collaborative's work. Two of these are discussed below.

Building support through all organizational levels. A common mistake collaboratives make is to assume agency and organization leaders also represent or speak for the grassroots and frontline concerns of their organizations. Decisions made and agreed to at the administrative level are not automatically translated into practice at the frontline. Conversely, administrative actions and decisions may not

reflect the experiences and input of frontline workers. It is critical to include frontline workers as part of the collaborative so that their perspectives and experiences can inform policy at all levels. The diverse perspectives from frontline and middle-management employees, as well as top administrators and policymakers, need to inform planning and decision-making, as well as implementation.

Expanding the definition of what constitutes knowledge. Almost everyone wears at least two hats — administrator and parent, worker and volunteer, professional and church member, parent and advocate. All too often, however, professional perspectives dominate collaborative efforts.

Many professionals believe their expertise should dictate any decisions that relate to their own professional domains. It is important to keep in mind that there are different kinds of expertise and knowledge. Parents are experts on the full range of their own child's needs and behaviors. Neighborhood leaders are experts on informal sources of support within their community. Young people are experts on what their peers are experiencing and feeling and what attracts or repels them.

Professionals often communicate in language and terminology that is difficult for others to grasp. They may adhere to professional standards of "proof," "evidence," and "interpretation" that discount other, more experiential perspectives. Finding a balance between the need for professional expertise and the need for consumer immediacy of experience is fundamental to reform. This may require rethinking and expanding the definition of what constitutes knowledge in order to reflect both professional and experiential expertise. It will require taking the time to listen and to learn to communicate in the language of personal experience and reflection as well as the language of professional judgement.

Putting Ideas Into Practice

Other Guidebooks address different elements involved in producing comprehensive reforms and seek to describe how to embrace diversity within each element. This section provides seven general principles that the organization California Tomorrow has developed for "drawing strength from diversity." While the principles arose from California Tomorrow's work in examining the implications of race, language, and culture for comprehensive reform efforts, we believe they are useful for developing strategies to address other forms of diversity, as well.

1. Involve people from diverse neighborhoods and constituencies in program design and development.

It is in the actual development and design of new programs, services, strategies, and opportunities that people from diverse neighborhoods and constituencies are most likely to be immediately engaged. Often, however, services are designed by professionals, with little input from the neighborhoods or constituencies being served. At best, one or two "representatives" are added to planning committees or decision-making groups. Usually, these "representatives" are not elected from their constituency, but selected by the community collaborative.

This can lead to charges of tokenism, but it also greatly underutilizes the resources that neighborhood and consumer representatives can bring to bear on service design and implementation. While one or two selected individuals can offer

important insights and advice based upon their own experiences, they cannot represent the range of views of an entire group. Collaboratives which creatively and persistently seek to be inclusive in their planning find that incorporating multiple perspectives greatly benefits the overall process and avoids the need to retrace steps to correct for prior, inaccurate perceptions (see Figure 3-3).

Figure 3-3

A Latina director headed a service integration effort that provided young families with a comprehensive array of support services. She planned to assign a Latino male worker the job of transporting mothers to the center, since many did not drive. Although the director shared the same ethnicity as many of the families, she had grown up in a middle-class, predominantly white environment quite different from the surrounding lower-income, Latino neighborhood. She was unaware that husbands found it absolutely unacceptable to allow their wives to be picked up by another man. Most likely, the husbands would have forbidden their wives from coming to the program. Fortunately, another woman on staff, who had grown up in the community, alerted the director to the plan's pitfall before any damage was done.

Source: *Drawing Strength from Diversity*

To generate support and involvement from diverse constituencies, collaboratives must recognize the following:

- *Collaboratives shouldn't assume people are uninterested just because they don't respond to an initial invitation.* It often takes persistent and creative outreach to elicit participation from those not currently involved. This is a trust-building process, and collaboratives may have to overcome prior histories of failed communication. In the past, various groups may have been asked to participate but did not feel

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their views were recognized or valued. Building trust is essential to long-term success.

- *Collaboratives should seek multiple avenues for reaching out to different people and groups.* Overcoming distrust is a critical issue, but it is not the only reason people may not respond. Sometimes, the collaborative extends the initial invitation in a manner foreign to a group's culture, customs, or language. Collaboratives should look at a non-response as a challenge and a cue to explore the matter further — to ask people why they did not respond and what could be done differently to spark their interest.

- *Professionals need to honestly examine their own values and acknowledge any biases, attitudes or behaviors that discourage people with different opinions from participating.* It is easy for professionals to take control and use terminology in ways that inhibit others from offering their own views. Similarly, professionals themselves often are impatient in listening to others who have different ways of communicating their experiences and perspectives.

- *Collaboratives should establish multiple avenues for participation and articulation of views.* If committee membership and meeting attendance are the only litmus tests for participation, the number and type of people likely to get involved will be limited. Joining a committee often is a very intimidating form of participation. Many people feel more comfortable sharing their knowledge and insights after they have

had a chance to develop relationships. Many initially feel more comfortable talking one-on-one rather than as part of a large group. Collaboratives can create opportunities for people to get to know each other through potluck dinners, informal ice-breakers at the beginning of meetings, family outings, and other events. Collaboratives can develop multiple approaches to receive information and advice — from surveys to focus groups to kitchen table conversations — which invite and allow people to share insights and feedback in written or verbal form. As relationships develop and people recognize their views are valued, people will take on other, more formal roles.

- *Collaboratives should avoid creating structures dominated by professionals.* Professionals can and often do use their expertise (and jargon) to control the discussion and hold sway over decisions. To be on an equal footing, community participants need both moral support and sheer numbers of representatives. Collaboratives must reflect a balance between professional and practical expertise, or the professionals will end up dictating reforms. Professionals must be willing to listen and to make make changes based upon participant suggestions and recommendations.

- *Collaboratives should assure that meeting sites are accessible — physically, geographically, and psychologically.* This means offering handicapped-accessible meeting places, interpretation for the hearing-impaired, and translation for those who do not speak English. It also means holding meetings at times and in locations that are

accessible to people from diverse communities — and in settings where they feel safe and comfortable.

- *Collaboratives need to provide training and support so community participants can be on a "level playing field."* First, that means explaining technical issues thoroughly and interpreting "bureaucrat-ese." To make intelligent decisions, members also need background on programs and issues they would not have known about when they first came to the group. To make sure citizens can participate effectively, the collaborative should consider holding special briefings before meetings, running training and orientation programs for new members, and enlisting experienced members as mentors. The group should also be ready to provide members access to any information they need quickly and easily.

2. *Focus on assets and strengths.*

Too often, communities are forced to place the focus on problems to justify the need for money or a new response. This approach results in people and neighborhoods being defined primarily by their deficits. This tends toward characterization of people and neighborhoods experiencing problems as incapable of taking care of their lives and their communities. While a strength-based approach is positive under any circumstances, it is particularly important in a diverse society.

Typically, the criteria used to define who "qualifies" as a problem is set by those in power, i.e. members of the dominant cultural group. Those neighborhoods and

individuals who are culturally, racially, or linguistically different from the dominant group are most likely to be considered a "problem." As a result, they bear the greatest impact of a deficit approach. In a diverse society, a strengths-based approach is instrumental to ensuring that collaboratives tap into the resources and strengths of all constituencies which make up a community.

Four types of assets, in particular, are worth stressing, as they are so often overlooked:

- *All communities have social and civic institutions that can contribute in important ways to community well-being.* These include religious organizations (churches, synagogues, mosques) and secular organizations (neighborhood associations, self-help groups, youth development activities, informal networks of support). The focus and composition of these institutions may differ according to ethnic and cultural backgrounds as well as space and resources. Still, any of them can be an entry point for engaging people from diverse communities in collaborative activities (principle #1 above). The work of McKnight and Kretzmann in *Building Communities from the Inside Out* is particularly relevant for this work.

- *Focusing on the practical knowledge and skills of community members — rather than just professional expertise — can bring new participants and valuable perspectives to the table.* Mutual aid and self-help organizations (from structured, Alcoholics Anonymous and Parents Anonymous self-help groups to informal,

neighborhood-based clubs and meetings) have much to offer in this regard, but reform efforts often overlook them. There is nothing like direct experience for identifying the ways current systems and supports need to change and for fashioning solutions. Disenfranchised neighborhoods often have a rich network of mutual aid and self-help groups that should be an essential element in rebuilding.

- *Young people's perspectives, energy and involvement are a tremendous — though often ignored — community asset.* Getting youth involved and tapping their leadership potential is critical to reform work. Engaging young people is infectious — they spread the word to their peers and form powerful youth networks. A strong youth component can benefit and greatly enhance community development. Collaboratives interested in involving youth must provide opportunities for youth input and support youth-initiated activities such as dances and other group events.

- *The culture, language and traditions of ethnic communities give collaboratives an opportunity to experience new ways of knowing and understanding.* For example, many cultural groups have retained values such as respect for elders and an emphasis on the collective good. Clearly, these attributes can benefit the whole community. Many ethnic groups also have retained important traditions and celebrations that sustain a sense of community and family strength. Multi-lingual communities can nurture bilingual and multilingual children, young people and adults.

3. Value the role that culture and language play in developing healthy families, individuals and communities.

Many so-called experts espouse these principles, but few act on them consistently in building their community collaboratives. It is relatively easy — and worthwhile — for a collaborative's programs to recognize customs and moments of celebration, such as baby naming ceremonies for African American infants. It is harder and takes more work to understand and value traditions and customs in ways that make work with individual families more effective. Figure 3-4 offers two illustrations of how to move in this direction. These examples illustrate how cultural norms help support child growth and development and point up how programs and services can adapt their strategies accordingly.

4. Hire staff who reflect the community.

Most community collaboratives develop strategies that require new staff positions, and many of them seek out people with close ties to their neighborhoods and communities to fill those positions. Here are two important reasons for hiring staff members who reflect the neighborhoods and families being served:

- Hiring people who reflect the neighborhood goes a long way toward showing that a collaborative values the role of culture and language (principle # 3 above). While all personnel need to develop cultural awareness and competency, the more staff members look and think like residents of the neighborhoods and communities they serve, the more understanding they can bring to their work with children, youth, and families.

Figure 3-4
Recognizing Cultural Norms — Case Illustrations

An Anglo elementary school teacher called a conference with the parents of a Native American child who had just joined her class. Much to her surprise, the child's aunt came to the meeting, trailed by several young children. The teacher interpreted the parents' absence as a lack of interest [and] was further dismayed when the aunt failed to mind her children as they removed books from a classroom shelf. The teacher ended the conference feeling that the student's family was not going to be a strong source of support for his education. The teacher's Native American colleague, however, had quite a different interpretation. Knowing that relatives often serve as primary caretakers in Native American families, she felt the aunt might have been the most appropriate person to attend the conference. Because the meeting was held in the classroom, she believed the aunt did not correct the children out of respect for the teacher's authority. The aunt would have waited for the teacher to establish the behavioral norms rather than intrude.

[In 1988], a mentally disturbed man with a history of hatred toward Asians fired 106 bullets into a Stockton, California, elementary school filled with Southeast Asian children. He killed five and wounded 29. The school's Cambodian and Vietnamese families felt traumatized. Parents pulled their youngsters out of class. The state's mental health system attempted to respond quickly with counseling for the distraught families — only to find resistance. Among Southeast Asians, someone is typically considered "crazy" or "normal," with no shades in between. A person only seeks help from outsiders if s/he is insane. As the cultural complexities became more obvious, mental health and school professionals were forced to expand their view of mental health services beyond Western approaches. Eventually, these providers learned from parents that allowing local Buddhist monks to hold a purification ceremony on the school grounds would restore a degree of emotional order. After the ritual, Southeast Asian families finally began to send their children back to classes.

Source: *Drawing Strength from Diversity*

- Jobs and employment opportunities are critically important to families in poor neighborhoods. Community collaboratives can build faith, and provide economic opportunity, by hiring from within. Hiring local people gives the neighborhood tangible evidence of the collaborative's commitment to reform. It also helps build the trust needed to make an impact on neighborhoods and communities.

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5. *Create opportunities for people to spend time in different groupings — separate and integrated.*

Done well, creating opportunities for people to spend time in separate and integrated settings allows groups and individuals to naturally identify areas of common ground, while increasing understanding of differences.

Ultimately, collaboratives must engage in frank and open dialogue across the community's diverse constituencies to address racism, sexism and other forms of oppression. At the same time, people may need to share and explore these issues with one another in their own settings in order to feel comfortable addressing them in a more heterogeneous group. This principle is true for people of color as well as for whites. The community collaborative should not be defensive when groups ask to meet separately, as long as segregated settings do not become settings for group

Figure 3-5

The Vaughn Family Center is a school-based family support program operating in a community which has been predominantly African American but has experienced a major influx of Latino families. The 40-member governing body has equal numbers of parents and providers. When the program first began, the parents involved were primarily Latino. Because African Americans were a minority, it initially was difficult to ensure that their voices were heard. Consequently, the Director of the Center encouraged the African American parents to begin meeting separately to define their concerns and hopes for the initiative. Through these meetings, the African American parents identified three primary issues: 1) they wanted their children to graduate bilingual in English and Spanish to help them communicate and expand their employment opportunities, 2) they wanted the school to present programs which present the cultural richness of the African American community, and 3) they wanted their children to leave Vaughn as competent readers. Having these concerns articulated was a critical first step toward creating the conditions for identifying areas of common interest as well as informing the Latino parents about how they could be more supportive and understanding of the concerns of African American parents.

Source: *Drawing Strength from Diversity*

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decision-making but rather contribute to more open dialogue and understanding (see Figure 3-5).

6. ***Use disaggregated data (information broken out by neighborhood, ethnicity, gender, class, etc.) to hold programs accountable for equal access and equally good outcomes for all children, youth and families.***

It is essential to recognize the different strengths and assets of diverse constituencies (principle # 2 above). But it is also important to recognize that not all groups are starting from the same place. Diverse communities differ on important measures of child, family and community well-being. As communities establish minimum outcomes or goals for the well-being of all children, they need to know how far along different groups are in attaining these goals. Understanding these difference will help the collaborative determine how to direct and redirect resources and create new strategies and opportunities. Ultimately, these strategies can create greater equity and help overcome prior histories of disadvantage and discrimination.

It is a sensitive issue to break down data by race and ethnicity for indicators of child well-being like the school dropout rate and incidence of youth violence, child abuse, adolescent child-bearing, and drug use. When people highlight differences in child outcomes by race, gender, socioeconomic class, or neighborhood, they easily can come across as being accusatory or assigning blame. If the collaborative has not laid a strong foundation (principles # 1-5 above), simply reporting child outcomes on a disaggregated basis is not likely to be productive or move the process forward. With the right kind of legwork, however, this kind of information can be very

important and useful. It can spark a commitment to improving outcomes for all children and families and bridging the gap in results for different subgroups. Collaboratives can also use disaggregated data as a tool to bring people with diverse perspectives together to zero in on the causes of inequities -- and work on strategies to rectify them.

7. *Apply these principles in all interactions—with individuals, programs, organizations and policy-making.*

The collaborative has to value diversity and practice inclusion at every level of activity, as outlined below:

- *Individuals.* Apply the principles to all individuals working in groups and to individual frontline workers involved with children, youth, and families.

- *Programs.* Structure programs, strategies, and opportunities to recognize the diverse assets and needs of different groups.

- *Organizations.* Build organizations that embrace diversity and assure opportunities for participation and career advancement by diverse groups.

- *Policies.* Set durable rules and customs to guide organizations toward diversity in all their affairs.

Applying these seven principles in everyday practice can help ensure the reform work of a collaborative is culturally relevant, embraces diversity and practices inclusion.

Summary of Seven Principles

1. Involve people from diverse communities in program design and development.
2. Focus on assets and strengths.
3. Value the role that culture and language play in developing healthy families, individuals, and communities.
4. Hire staff who reflect the community served.
5. Create opportunities for people to spend time in different groupings – to allow time to be separate and integrated.
6. Use disaggregated data (e.g. broken out by neighborhood, ethnicity, gender, class, etc.) to hold programs accountable for equal access and equally good outcomes for all children, youth and families.
7. Apply these principles at all levels – individual, program, organization and policy.

Checklist – Questions for Collaboratives to Raise in Developing New Initiatives

- ☑ Is the work of the collaborative grounded in a solid understanding of the strengths, concerns, and needs of the diverse groups and communities being served?
- ☑ Does the work of the initiative build a sense of community across different ethnic groups and constituencies as well as foster respect for the identity of each group or constituency?
- ☑ Are diverse groups involved in shaping and determining the direction and design of the initiative?
- ☑ Has the initiative taken issues of language and cultural appropriateness into account in determining the type and nature of services provided?
- ☑ Has the initiative equipped itself with staff and managers who have the skills to work successfully with the diverse constituencies it serves?
- ☑ Are issues and challenges related to diversity openly discussed and used to inform initiative design and policy?
- ☑ Is the initiative able to effectively evaluate its impact on the diverse constituencies its serves?
- ☑ Does the initiative infuse lessons learned about working effectively (as well as ineffectively) with diverse constituencies into the broader array of family-serving agencies?

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Appendix 3-1
Drawing Strength from Diversity

About this Appendix:

There are a wide variety of books, guides, and articles about service integration and collaborative reform efforts. Many of these do not give major attention to issues of race, culture, and ethnicity. *Drawing Strength from Diversity* describes how these issues must be integrated into all reform efforts — from community assessment to service design and delivery to agency staffing to local governance. The excerpt from the introduction to *Drawing Strength from Diversity* describes how issues of diversity are inextricably linked with efforts to improve human services.

Source:

Chang, Hedy Nai-Lin, Denise De La Rosa Salazar, and Cecelia Leong. *Drawing Strength from Diversity: Effective Services for Children, Youth and Families*. San Francisco, CA: California Tomorrow, 1994.

Excerpt:

A. The Implications of Culture and Race

The racial, cultural and linguistic diversity of the United States creates tremendous and complex challenges for institutions that work with families. To understand the roots of this situation, one must recognize that culture heavily affects the approach an agency or individual takes with a client. Culture, in this context, refers to the values, beliefs, and traditions of a specific group — the set of rules that guide members' behavior. A group's culture evolves over time. It is influenced by numerous factors, including ethnicity, economic conditions and racial experience. While those of the same culture group may share similar tendencies, the extent to which any individual abides by those norms is highly variable. It can be affected by many variables, including gender, income, age, sexual orientation, education, and exposure to other cultures.

In the United States, the culture and language of Anglo Europeans have exerted the strongest influences on this country's institutions and social practices. The book, *Developing Cross-Cultural Competence*, by Eleanor W. Lynch and Marci J. Hanson, identifies eight values and assumptions that typify this dominant culture: 1) the importance of individualism and privacy; 2) a belief in the equality of all individuals; 3) informality in interactions with others; 4) an emphasis on the future, change, and progress; 5) belief in the general goodness of humanity; 6) an emphasis on the importance of time and punctuality; 7) high regard for achievement, action, work, and materialism; and 8) pride in being direct and assertive.

Whether providers can articulate them or not, these values often play a significant role in shaping how they respond to a child or family. For example, the emphasis

on individualism makes it difficult for a provider to understand decisions made by a person who refuses to act in his own best interest because it counters the wishes of his family. The dominant culture also is strongly oriented toward the rational and empirical. Providers who share this orientation have difficulty imagining or devising a response to cultures oriented more toward spiritual or magical belief, such as the Southeast Asian Buddhist community described in the introduction [see second example in Figure 3-4]. Moreover, because of the historical dominance of Anglo culture, its values and assumptions are typically used to define appropriate behavior and action for all ethnic groups.

Dealing with culture and linguistic diversity is complex and difficult. Recognizing the extent to which institutions, approaches and actions may be embedded in a culture or language that differs significantly from that of the families being served is only a first step. Once differences are detected, the challenge is to develop an appropriate response. In some situations, the answer is clear. The white teacher in the introduction [see first example in Figure 3-4] could gain a better understanding of Native American culture so that she no longer makes inaccurate judgements.

Sometimes, however, a solution is not so obvious. For example, the common U.S. cultural emphasis on achieving individual success through competition and winning clashes with Native American communal values which emphasize tribal achievement over individual glory. Many would argue that the United States would be better off if it embraced some of these alternative values. But figuring out how to respect these communal values in an economic system premised on individual achievement is not so easy. For example, a social worker aware of these cultural differences might still have difficulty knowing how to help a Native American man or woman interview effectively for a job. Service providers may also find themselves disagreeing strongly with a value upheld in a family. The U.S. culture, for example, takes a more egalitarian view of women than many other cultures. A teacher who comes in contact with parents whose family traditions cause them to discourage a daughter from continuing her education might be much less inclined to yield to such cultural beliefs.

Nonetheless, the opening vignettes demonstrate the value of engaging people from the community in a dialogue about the cultural and linguistic appropriateness of services provided to them. At a minimum, these discussions are a mechanism for detecting whether a problem exists. Often they can be instrumental in developing an effective solution. Even when service providers and families do not agree, understanding each other's perspectives can still be a step forward. Such dialogue allows for supports and services to reflect the ideas and values of multiple cultures, not just the ideas espoused by the dominant culture.

The diversity of U.S. society also compels institutions that serve families to deal with race and discrimination. Racial minorities, who are culturally (and often linguistically) different from the dominant ethnic group, continue to confront the challenge of overcoming our country's long history of racial discrimination.

While such overt discrimination is now illegal, there is still strong evidence that its legacy continues to

plague our institutions. Consider the preliminary findings of the California Assembly's Commission on the Status of African American Males. It found that one-sixth of all black men in California, 16 or older, are arrested each year. Such arrest records haunt these men's job prospects for the rest of their lives. The most troubling finding was that 92% of black men released by the police on drug charges are released for lack of evidence or inadmissible evidence — compared with 64% of whites and 81% of Latinos. The adverse consequences of this situation directly affect the women and children who depend upon these black men for emotional and financial support.

Therefore, developing an effective system of supports calls for exploring how negative outcomes for minority communities might reflect, at least in part, the discriminatory practices of institutions and their employees, whether or not these actions are intentional.

B. The Inextricable Links Between Diversity and Reform

Over the past decade, frustration with the inadequacies of the current system of services for our children and families has inspired groups across the country to develop strategies for making services more effective. Operating at local, state, and national levels, these reform initiatives typically have involved a broad range of public and private agencies, including schools, social services, probation, health services, community-based organizations (CBO's), and others. Such initiatives have taken a wide variety of forms, among them: linking health and human services with schools; improving school readiness by offering young children and their families a comprehensive array of supports; or moving youth in institutionalized settings (e.g. juvenile hall) to community-based facilities.

These initiatives offer tremendous opportunities to address issues of diversity precisely because they create chances for communities and families to help design and develop services and supports. They also encourage policymakers and providers to reflect upon whether the types of services they wish to provide are appropriate, given the ethnic diversity of families served.

In the past, efforts to reform human services have primarily focused on the need to address the detrimental impact of fragmentation and unnecessary duplication of services. The Institute for Educational Leadership report *Together We Can* summarizes the perceived flaws of the current system. First, services are oriented toward crisis rather than prevention. Second, the current social welfare system divides children and families into rigid and distinct categories (e.g. drug and alcohol abuse, poor academic performance, gang activity, etc.) that fail to reflect interrelated causes and solutions. Third, the current system is unable to meet the needs of children and families due to poor communication among the various public and private agencies that comprise it. Fourth, agencies tend to focus on single issues, hampering their ability to craft comprehensive solutions to complex problems.

However, as the field has gained experience, policy-makers and practitioners have realized that simply changing the relationships among agencies is not

enough to fundamentally improve outcomes for children and families. Reformers are now engaging in a broader set of strategies. Emerging experience suggests there are five key elements to reforming systems for children and families:

1. **Community Decision-making:** Systems reform requires the creating of a community governance structure that embraces an inclusive, diverse group of stakeholders from all domains of the service delivery systems and the community. This body's purpose is to guide the reform process and carry out critical policy and leadership functions.

2. **Improved Outcomes:** Systems reform also requires the definition of specific outcomes e.g. improvements in the lives of children and families, such as increased educational success or greater family stability — which serve as the underlying goals of a collaborative effort. Such outcomes-based goals facilitate collaboration among agencies and systems because they cannot be achieved by a single entity. They also provide a basis for an on-going system of accountability that holds the collaborating agencies responsible for achieving the stated goals.

3. **Effective Services:** The services emerging from a reformed system must link public, private, and community resources. Services should reflect a new set of principles: community-based; geographically and psychologically accessible; comprehensive and responsive; family-focused and personalized; integrated and culturally and linguistically responsive. Effective services draw upon the informal networks and supports that already exist in communities.

4. **Creative Financing:** Reforming services involves changing how services are financed so that funding promotes provision of effective services for children and families. Common strategies for changing how services are financed include reallocating existing resources, increasing flexibility in categorical funding streams, and gaining maximum advantage of federal entitlement streams.

5. **Leadership Development and Organizational Change:** Systems reform requires community leaders to join with knowledgeable, creative, and committed public and private agencies in transforming systems and creating organizational models for effective service delivery.

Successfully implementing any of these reforms requires understanding issues of cultural, racial, and linguistic diversity. For example, creating an effective community decision-making structure requires understanding how to reach out to various ethnic and linguistic groups. Furthermore, common understanding must be built among these groups, despite differences in language, racial experience and power status. But many collaboratives find themselves unable to develop

strategies to involve key stakeholders from a particular ethnic group because they do not understand the culture or language well enough. Other collaboratives manage to bring all of the stakeholders to a meeting only to discover that the process breaks down, partly because stakeholders are unable to understand each other and define common ground amid cultural and linguistic differences.

Similarly, service providers' awareness of the experiences of racial and linguistic minority groups becomes critical for developing outcomes-based goals that are relevant to all children and families. For example, one collaborative's goals might include strengthening the capacity of families to care for their own children as well as reducing the number of children placed in "out-of-home care" (foster homes, juvenile hall or institutional care for the mentally ill). One question arises immediately: How does the collaborative define "strengthened families"? Is the goal limited to strengthening the ability of biological parents to care for their young? Or is it more encompassing? In many cultural groups, it is common practice to rely upon grandparents and extended family members to care for youngsters. Will the collaborative's outcome be defined broadly enough so that increasing the number of children living with extended family members is also considered an indicator of success?

Providing coordinated, comprehensive services also requires ensuring that families are not denied access to certain types of assistance because of their race. For example, homeless advocates in one community found that discrimination made it difficult for homeless African American women to move off the streets. When the women went alone to apply for housing, they were often told that a vacancy no longer existed. They were often much more successful if accompanied by a white caseworker. White homeless women, on the other hand, encountered far fewer problems.

Even when service providers understand what type of assistance would be effective for a client from a particular ethnic group, they may not be able to offer such help unless the funding source is willing to pay for it. Advocates working with the African American community have found, for example, that grandparents have had a difficult time being paid to serve as foster parents for their grandchildren, even when it may be in the best interest of the child. The child welfare system licenses only families who are able to provide separate bedrooms for male and female children. But many African Americans (as well as people from other cultures) do not see children of opposite sexes sharing a room as inappropriate. This issue is complicated by economics, since many grandparents also may not have the financial resources to offer children separate rooms.

These examples demonstrate that issues of diversity are inextricably linked to efforts to reform the institutions that serve families. Mutual processes are at work. Reforms will not succeed in improving outcomes for children and families unless they are grounded in an understanding of diversity. At the same time, the reform initiatives are advocating changes that lay a strong foundation for culturally and linguistically appropriate systems of services. Ultimately, a sweeping agenda is needed. Addressing diversity is not just about increasing the understanding and sensitivity of individual providers. It also requires examining whether institutions are engaged (intentionally or not) in policies and practices that hurt particular types of families or communities, then developing strategies for change.

Appendix 3-2
Community Building and Diversity

About this Appendix:

There are an increasing number of initiatives designed to "build community" through a combination of human service and education reforms, community organizing, and community economic development activities. These community-building initiatives generally work in poor or disinvested neighborhoods, which themselves are ethnically diverse and often multi-cultural. The references annotated here represent efforts to ensure that community-building initiatives effectively address issues of racism and ethnic diversity.

Annotated Sources:

Chang, Hedy Nai-Lin. "Democracy, Diversity, and Social Capital," *National Civic Review*, Vol. 86, No. 2 (Summer, 1997) p. 141-147.

> Based upon the work of Robert Putnam and others, there is increasing recognition of the importance of social capital (as distinguished from human capital and economic capital) to sustained community vitality. This article discusses how embracing diversity is essential to building social capital and emphasizes the need to: (1) recognize and support different ways of generating social capital, (2) identify common values that can bind us together, (3) increase awareness of our interdependence across differences in race, language, and culture, and (4) invest in leadership development.

Chang, Hedy Nai-Lin. *Community Building and Diversity: Principles for Action*. San Francisco, CA: California Tomorrow, 1997.

> This goal of this guide is to begin a process of identifying how community initiatives can effectively confront issues of racism and ethnic diversity. It presents, in much more detailed form, very similar principles to the seven principles provided in this *Guidebook*. As the author notes in the introduction, "Often, the power of principles is not in the wording but in the dialogue which occurs about whether they reflect a set of common beliefs and how they can be operationalized. These principles only become meaningful when the people who have the power to realize these ideals have had the opportunity to discuss, modify and own them."

Delgado, Gary. *Beyond the Politics of Place: New Directions in Community Organizing in the 1990s*. Oakland: CA, Applied Research Center 1994.

This report on community organizing draws from the author's twenty-plus year experience in community organizing. It examines the history of community organizing since the 1960s, with particular emphasis upon the role of "intermediaries" or "organizers" to do the organizing work and how intermediaries need to work within communities of color. It includes a resource list of organizer training centers.

Oliver, Melvin, and Thomas Shapiro. *Black Wealth, White Wealth: A New Perspective on Racial Inequality*. New York, NY: Routledge, 1995.

This book explores the causes and consequences of the disparity in wealth between African Americans and whites, which they show in 1984 meant dual-income black households possessed only nineteen cents of mean financial assets for every dollar owned by similarly-situated white families. The causes include the vestiges of slavery and a history of discrimination that mean black families are not able to fall back upon the financial resources accumulated and passed along by earlier generations. They also include the fact that home ownership, a common way for families to build assets, has been harder to achieve for African Americans, due to redlining, government policies favoring the subsidy of home-buying in suburbs, and the devaluation of houses in predominantly black neighborhoods. Discrimination in the job market and lack of access to quality educational opportunities are other major institutional causes, which the authors refer to as structural racism.

Appendix 3-3
Respecting Diversity in Frontline Practice

About this Appendix:

Issues of diversity must be recognized and addressed at many levels, including the policy level and program administration level. Nowhere is it more important to recognize and respect diversity than at the frontline practice level, whether that be a teacher, a social worker, public health nurse, or a family support worker. The following annotations and references are from the Family Resource Coalition of America's work in defining "best practices" in working with families.

Annotated Sources and Excerpt:

Goetz, Kathy, editor. *FRC Report: Culture and Family-Centered Practice*. Volume 14, Nos. 3 & 4 (Fall/Winter, 1995-1996.

> This double issue of the *FRC Report* offers a variety of articles from leading practitioners on how to work with different cultural and multi-cultural groups and to draw upon cultural assets. It also includes a resource file of organizations, individual trainers and consultants, and suggested readings on culture and family-centered practice.

Best Practices Project. *Guidelines for Family Support Practice*. Chicago, IL: Family Resource Coalition of America, 1996.

Following over three hundred focus groups of more than 2,000 people from family support programs around the country, the Family Resource Coalition of America defined and described ten core principles of family support practice:

1. Staff and families work together in relationships based on equality and respect.
2. Staff enhance families' capacity to support the growth and development of all family members — adults, youth, and children.
3. Families are resources to their members, to other families, to programs, and to communities.
4. Programs affirm and strengthen families' cultural, racial, and linguistic identities and enhance their ability to function in a multi-cultural society.
5. Programs are embedded in their communities and contribute to the community-building process.
6. Programs advocate with families for services and systems that are fair, responsive, and accountable to the families served.

7. Practitioners work with families to mobilize formal and informal resources to support family development.
8. Programs are flexible and continually responsive to emerging family and community issues.
9. Principles of family support are modeled in all program activities, including planning, governance, and administration.

Detailed guidelines and key practices for applying each principle are provided. The outline of the guidelines for principle 4 are excerpted below.

Affirming Diversity: Guidelines for Practice

Some family support programs are located in culturally homogenous neighborhoods and therefore serve families of a single cultural group; others are multicultural. All family support programs affirm participants' cultural, ethnic, racial, and linguistic identity; promote cross-cultural understanding and respect for differences; and help families navigate the dominant U.S. society and culture — even as they work to make society more supportive of all families.

Guidelines and Key Practices

Guideline A: Programs support and affirm expressions of cultural and linguistic identity.

Key Practices

1. Build upon the cultural beliefs and practices of the families and communities the program serves.
2. Help families pass on their cultures and languages to their children.
3. Foster opportunities for families of the same ethnic or cultural group to spend time together.

Guideline B: Programs work with families to combat racist attitudes (and other attitudes that promote hate) and to promote the development of positive cultural, ethnic, and racial identities among children.

Key Practices

1. Create an environment that reflects positive images of different cultural, ethnic, and racial groups and does not portray anyone negatively.
2. Create opportunities for staff and family members to become more aware of actions, beliefs, or words that may promote bias.
3. Assist parents in understanding their role as mediators of their children's experiences and support them in this role.
4. Identify and challenge institutional forms of discrimination.

Guideline C: Programs strengthen staff and families' ability to relate to those who are different from themselves.

Key Practices

1. Create an environment of continuous learning about cultures — one's own and others.
2. Create opportunities for families of different backgrounds to identify areas of common ground and to accept and value differences between them.

Guideline D: Programs help families to understand and negotiate the dominant culture and language of the United States.

Key Practices

1. Serve as a resource for information on how the dominant U.S. culture and institutions function, and how national, state, and local policies affect children and families.
2. Teach the skills parents and staff need in order to work with, participate in, and advocate within institutions and agencies in this society.
3. Work with other community agencies and service providers to increase their understanding of and ability to relate to families of different cultural backgrounds.

Guidelines E: Hiring policies and training opportunities reflect the program's priority on affirming diversity.

Key Practices

1. Include staff who reflect the cultural and ethnic experiences and languages of the families with whom they work and integrate their expertise into the entire program.
2. Provide ongoing staff development on the issues that diversity presents.

-- *Guidelines for Family Support Practice*, page 55.

Appendix 3-4

Beyond Cultural Competence: *Cultural Democracy and Power Sharing*

About this Appendix:

While cultural competence is essential to effective practice, there are issues related to race, culture, and power that go deeper than individual practice. Through discussions with workers, parents, administrators, and family support scholars of color, Makungu Akinyela has developed six principles for incorporating "cultural democracy" into family support programs and practices. These principles are described in more detail in Akinyela's report, *Culture and Power in Practice: Cultural Democracy and the Family Support Movement*, published by the Family Resource Coalition of America. The following is an abstract from that report.

Source:

Akinyela, Makungu. *Diversity, Cultural Democracy, and the Family Support Movement: An Abstract*. Chicago, IL: Family Resource Coalition of America: 1998.

Excerpt:

Cultural diversity is a fact of life in American society today. Increasingly, the issue is not whether diversity *should* be recognized and accepted. The pressing question for families, human service professionals and lay leaders in communities is how the power inequality between cultural ethnic communities and dominant culture society will be challenged in the future. On a practical level, this means that we need to rethink the design, development and implementation of family support so that programs reflect the experiences, values, and culture of the communities they serve.

Cultural democracy (Ramirez and Castaneda 1974; Darder 1991) is a philosophy which focuses on the question of power relationships between subordinate and dominant cultural groups in society. Cultural democracy supports the human right of each community to have equal access to information and equal influence over policies; program design, development, and implementation; evaluation; funding; and other issues which affect the community. Cultural democracy not only supports the right of each community to these things, but supports the community's right to express family support needs from their own cultural experience and their own cultural *voice*.

The most significant aspect of this paper is the reporting of findings from interviews by the author of workers, parents, administrators, and family support scholars of color. From the interviews, the following six principles of cultural democracy in family support work emerged.

1. *Cultural self-determination in family support programs is an essential element for a successful program.*

A common thread expressed throughout many family support programs conducted by and serving people of color is the idea of cultural "self-determination." This is the principle that people of color should define and articulate the cultural values and expressions which meet their needs and reflect their perspectives and experiences within programs. This common thread of self-determination as a cultural value in family support programs speaks very directly to "empowerment" and exactly what power means for communities of color. Appropriation of power practice as cultural self-determination, calls for strong efforts to reconstruct a society in which all cultures can share equally and have equal authority and access to resources which define power. Within family support, this equal participation must occur in all areas, including policy development, program implementation, participant involvement, and administration.

2. *Ongoing training in cultural diversity issues of family support is a priority and cannot be considered a one- or two-time event.*

Many of those interviewed related experiences of working for white dominated programs where "cultural competency" was reduced to a two-hour inservice training session every few years, or to a conference workshop on special occasions. The question of culture as a site of social change and struggle was rarely raised. Cultural competency usually meant familiarity with language, holidays, and some very generalized patterns of family behavior. As the family support movement grows and becomes a part of more communities, it will become imperative to enrich our understanding that cultural competency among staff and administrators is as important as the ability to converse with families in their own language.

3. *The ethnic/cultural makeup of the staff from administrative to para-professional matters, and emphasis should be placed on staffing which reflects the linguistic/cultural/ethnic makeup of the community being served.*

While some professionals might state that it is not so significant what the ethnicity or culture of the staff is, as long as they are "culturally competent," many family support professionals of color believe that the continuation of having key staff positions, particularly administrative and professional staff, filled by whites is a subtle message about the power relationships of the community to the larger society. This issue transcends the issue of "race" and is really an issue of power and representation. Jerry Tello states that when families of color must depend on authority figures who are not part of their community for so much of their survival, they receive a subtle message that the collective community is not capable of caring for itself and that they must in the end depend upon outside help. On the other hand, when families see professionals who are from the community and who are caring about the community's issues, the message is that the community is coming together to care for its own.

Professionals of color argue that this is important for the development of a sense of collective, community self-reliance.

4. *Defining and developing a group identity among program participants, and with the community as a whole, is a key element to family and community power.*

The question of group identity is rarely, if ever, mentioned in dominant culture family support literature. Yet group identity and involvement with the family's primary culture is a means for empowering families and the community to take actions which will change social conditions. Hedy Chang, Denise De La Rosa Salazer, and Cecelia Leong indicate that an integral part of creating the conditions under which people from diverse communities can engage in a dialogue about their common interests is supporting the efforts of diverse groups to build a strong sense of identity within their own group. Too often, efforts designed to strengthen the group consciousness of separate groups is viewed as the polar opposite of initiatives aimed at fostering understanding across groups in an integrated setting. Yet identification with the larger community and its needs is recognized as a strength for families and the individuals in the family and must be a building block for family support programs.

5. *An emphasis on cultural group collective responsibility, commitment, and consciousness is encouraged and evident throughout the program.*

Closely related to group identity is the notion of collective responsibility to the ethnic group and hence to the community. In an interview for this paper, Jerry Tello stated that "for many people of color, appropriating power and decision-making is not an individual pursuit. Rather, it is a process in which the individual is relegated power by the community and given responsibility to work in the interest of the community." This notion of collective power rarely is embedded in the meaning of power as defined in social services and family support programs. "We are told not to rely on the authority of those in our circle, 'those are not the true teachers,' we are told," Tello said. Families of color often are discouraged from using the collective indigenous power of "natural" community leaders such as elders, curanderos (spiritual healers), and others. They are pushed to rely individually upon the resources of outside agencies which have little knowledge of the cultural ways and means of the community.

6. *Issues of cultural uniqueness, community pride, and the use of culture as a tool to resist institutional discrimination is a key source of strength for the family and the community and is evident in the program.*

While currently accepted family support principles and practice place culture as one aspect of family support, the culturally democratic principles of family support espoused by indigenous programs place the question of culture at the very center of program development and policy. In these programs, there is a strong focus on cultural reconstruction, validation, and reaffirmation. In family support programs facilitated by professionals of color and others sensitive to cultural issues of ethnically diverse communities, culture is not simply *one* method of empowering families. Culture is a *primary source* of strength to overcome economic, political, and social problems which contribute to the marginalization and disruption of families.

Sources for Further Information

Persons interested in reading further on this topic may wish to start with some of the publications referenced in the Appendices. Depending upon the publication, they may be obtained by through one of the following organizations:

California Tomorrow
Fort Mason Center, Building B
San Francisco, CA 94123
telephone: (415) 441-7631
fax: (415) 441-7635
website under construction: www.californiatomorrow.org

Family Resource Coalition of America
20 North Wacker Drive, Suite 1100
Chicago, IL 60606
telephone: (312) 338-0900
fax: (312) 338-1522
website: www.frca.org
e-mail: frca@frca.org

Applied Research Center
25 Embarcadero Cove
Oakland, CA 94606
telephone: (510) 465-9577
fax: (510) 465-9577
website under construction
e-mail: arc@arc.org

Other NCSI Publications

Resource Briefs

- #1 So You Think You Need Some Help? Making Effective Use of Technical Assistance, 1992.
- #2 Charting a Course: Assessing a Community's Strengths and Needs, 1993.
- #3 Who Should Know What: Confidentiality and Information Sharing in Service Integration, 1993.
- #4 Getting to the Bottom Line: State and Community Strategies for Financing Comprehensive Community Service Systems, 1993.
- #5 Getting Started: Planning a Comprehensive Service Initiative, 1994.
- #6 Making it Simpler: Streamlining and Integrating Intake Eligibility, 1993.
- #7 Making a Difference: Moving to Outcome-Based Accountability for Comprehensive Service Reforms, 1994.
- #8 Wise Counsel: Redefining the Role of Consumers, Professionals, and Community Workers in the Helping Process. Available June 1998.

Working Papers

- Beyond the Buzzwords: Key Principles of Effective Frontline Practice, 1994.
- Steps Along an Uncertain Path: State Initiatives Promoting Comprehensive, Community-Based Reform, 1996.
- Realizing a Vision for Children, Families and Neighborhoods: An Alternative to Other Modest Proposals, 1996.

The above publications are available for $4.00 each prepaid from the Child and Family Policy Center, 218 Sixth Avenue, Suite 1021, Des Moines, IA 50309-4006, Tel: (515) 280-9027, Fax: (515) 244-8997. Iowa orders add 5% state sales tax.

A Matter of Commitment

NCSI Clearinghouse Guidebooks

Guidebook 1: ***Understanding the Big Picture: Developing a Strategic Approach to Reform.***
Shows the interconnectedness of the different Guidebooks and provides a framework for taking action.

Guidebook 2*: ***Defining the Prize: From Agreed-Upon Outcomes to Results-Based Accountability.***
Describes the manner in which communities can establish measurable goals and how these relate to programmatic strategies and accountability.

Guidebook 3*: ***Valuing Diversity and Practicing Inclusion: Core Aspects of Collaborative Work.***
Discusses the importance of recognizing differences and placing issues of race, class, and culture on the table.

Guidebook 4: ***Where the Rubber Meets the Road: Constructing Effective Services and Supports.***
Outlines the different changes needed in health, education, and human service systems, including the development of new proventive systems.

Guidebook 5*: ***Creating Opportunity: Making the Link to Housing, Jobs, and Economic Development.***
Discusses how service collaborations can contribute to addressing neighborhood and community economic needs.

Guidebook 6*: ***Getting to the Grassroots: Neighborhood Organizing and Mobilization.***
Describes the steps that service collaborations must take to connect with neighborhood resources, reach out to individuals, and include neighborhood voices in all aspects of reform.

Guidebook 7: ***From Recipient to Contributor: Parent and Youth Involvement in Decision-Making and Service Delivery.***
Describes how to engage youth and families at both the service delivery and the policy development levels.

Guidebook 8: ***Gaining and Exercising Authority: Building Local Decision-Making and Governance Structures.***
Examines different approaches to creating decision-making structures at the community level which are sustainable, representative, legitimate, and capable of marshalling resources across systems to achieve agreed-upon goals.

Guidebook 9: ***Rethinking Financing: Moving From Funding Silos and Toward Investment-Based Budgeting.***
Describes strategies to ensure financing systems are linked to reform goals and accountable to achieving desired results for children, families, and neighborhoods.

Guidebook 10: ***The Road to Success: Building the Capacity to Manage Change.***
Describes investments in leadership development and organizational change strategies that can create the capacity to implement reforms.

Guidebook 11: ***Delivering on the Vision: Tools and Strategies for Frontline Professional Development.***
Describes approaches for building the skills and qualities needed for changing worker roles at the frontline and supervisory levels.

Guidebook 12: ***Building Public Will and Commitment to Sustain the Work.***
Describes ways to build broad public understanding and support.

Guidebook 13*: ***Learning from Doing: Continuous Evaluation and Quality Improvement.***
Introduces approaches to evaluation that recognize the path-breaking work community collaborations undertake.

Guidebook 14: ***Going to Scale: Broadening and Deepening the Commitment to Success.***
Describes the importance and challenge of extending beyond demonstration efforts to changed systems of services and supports.

* *Guidebooks currently published and available*